

**ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE**

The subject invention provides a column assembly for releasably locking and unlocking a steering column of a vehicle. The assembly includes a steering column rotatable about a central axis for imparting a direction to the vehicle and a lock bolt  
5 moveable from an unlocked position to a locked position to lock the steering column against rotation. When in the locked position, the steering column is prevented from rotating which imparts a load to the lock bolt. A lock bolt drive is connected to the lock bolt to move the lock bolt from the locked position to the unlocked position. However, the load acting on the lock bolt prevents the lock bolt drive from being able  
10 to move the lock bolt from the locked position to the unlocked position. Therefore, a release mechanism is operative to reduce the load on the lock bolt sufficiently to enable the lock bolt drive to move the lock bolt from the locked position to the unlocked position.